

Vote for Major Spending Bill that Republicans Failed to Pass

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(Washington, DC)— Today, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) and the Democratic Majority in the House did their part to prevent the federal government from shutting down for the first time since 1996. They passed what is known as a Continuing Resolution, a bill that encompasses all 9 of the 11 spending bills that Republicans failed to pass last year. While adhering to the spending limit in the Republican budget, the legislation includes notable increases in funding for education, housing assistance, veterans' healthcare, and law enforcement.

"This spending bill will not only ensure the government stays open to help people, but also includes, within the budget cap, a number of new investments that will directly help the people of North Jersey," explained Rothman. "Specifically, Pell grants for students struggling to afford a higher education were increased for the first time in four years. This is excellent news for the students at Bergen County Community College, New Jersey City University, and other schools throughout our area where students receive and depend on Pell grants to graduate without crushing levels of debt."

Earlier this month, Rothman also introduced two bills to address the funding shortfalls faced by local housing authorities as a result of misguided federal policies. In a victory for New Jersey, the language of one of those bills was included in the Continuing Resolution. The provision reforms the funding formula used to distribute Section 8 vouchers, which are vital to low-income families struggling to afford a place to live. As a result, local housing authorities that were previously shortchanged — including many in New Jersey — will now receive adequate funding.

"Affordable housing is one of the most pressing issues facing families in North Jersey. I am pleased that today's bill reforms how Section 8 vouchers are distributed, but I will continue to fight for passage of the Housing Opportunities Made Easier (HOME) Act, my bill to create 150,000 new Section 8 vouchers. In New Jersey, more than 23,000 low-income elderly or disabled New Jerseyans receive housing assistance and I believe that helping this vulnerable population is the right thing to do," said Rothman.

Additionally, today's Continuing Resolution included a number of other increases that Rothman has fought for as a member of the House Appropriations Committee, including: increased funding for veterans' healthcare to serve an anticipated increase of at least 325,000 patients at Veterans' Affairs hospitals; a \$1.3 billion increase in funding to combat global HIV/AIDS; a \$1.2 billion increase in funding for Ryan White CARE grants to prevent and treat HIV in the United States; and increased funding for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, under which Rep. Rothman's Secure Our Schools program is administered. Rothman's ban on Stage 1 noisy aircraft at Teterboro Airport is also protected in this bill.

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